



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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A severe shortage of fish next winter was predicted today by the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior on the basis of current holdings of frozen fish, which on June 1 totaled only 40 million pounds or 25 percent below average.

Holdings of fish in freezers and cold storage houses normally reach the lowest level of the year May 1, and thereafter begin to build up sharply to a peak in the late fall. These fish serve as a reserve supply for the winter season, when fishing operations are restricted by bad weather, and many species of fish are unavailable.

Holdings this year increased eight million pounds between May 1 and June 1, but the normal increase during this period is about 13 million pounds. Last year about 70 million pounds were in storage on June 1, compared with the present holdings of 40 million.

Fish and Wildlife Service officials said that production generally is running ahead of last year's figures, but current market demand for fish is so heavy that little is left for freezing. With reserves of frozen fish low and only a small percentage of the pack of canned fish available for civilians this year, an acute shortage of fish next winter is expected.

Preliminary figures released by the Service indicated that on June 1, holdings of salt-water fish totaled 33.4 million pounds, fresh-water fish approximately 2 million pounds, shellfish 4.5 million pounds. Whiting, mackerel, cod, and haddock, which ordinarily comprise a large percentage of the salt-water fish in storage, all showed sharp declines compared with last year. Holdings of fresh-water fish were only about a sixth as large as last year; shellfish holdings, on the other hand, showed little change.

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